

# **DESOTO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

## **BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**TOMMY LEWIS, PRESIDENT, PRESIDING**

**August 23, 2001**

### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

The August 23, 2001, meeting of the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Supervisor Tommy Lewis of DeSoto County.

Chief Deputy Charlie Brown of the DeSoto County Sheriff's Department was present and did open the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors meeting in a regular session to hear any and all business to come before the Board. The following were present:

Supervisor Jessie Medlin-----District 1  
Supervisor Eugene C. Thach----- District 2  
Supervisor Gerald Clifton-----District 3  
Supervisor John Caldwell-----District 4  
Supervisor Tommy Lewis-----District 5  
W. E. "Sluggo" Davis-----Chancery Clerk  
David Armstrong-----County Administrator  
William Austin-----Board Attorney

### **B. INVOCATION**

Supervisor John Caldwell presented the invocation.

### **C. OLD BUSINESS**

### **D. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **1. Horn Lake Creek Drainage District**

Commissioner Roe Ross, of the Horn Lake Creek Drainage District, asked the Board of Supervisors for approval to purchase riprap and use the County's contract for riprap, for the Horn Lake Creek Drainage District projects. Commissioner Ross said the County would be repaid for the riprap that will be used. Supervisor John Caldwell made the motion and Supervisor Eugene Thach seconded the motion to approve the County to buy riprap for the Horn Lake Creek Drainage District using the County's contract with the Drainage Department repaying the County for material. The motion passed by a vote as follows:

Supervisor Jessie Medlin	ABSENT
Supervisor Eugene Thach	YES
Supervisor Gerald Clifton	YES
Supervisor John Caldwell	YES
Supervisor Tommy Lewis	YES

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**ITEM D, CONTINUED,**

**2. Homestead Exemption**

Supervisor Eugene Thach made the motion and Supervisor John Caldwell seconded the motion to approve the petition to adjust the homestead exemption supplemental roll as presented by the Chancery Clerk. as follows:

**PARCEL NUMBER & LOCATION**

1067-3523.0-00046.00 – Olive Branch
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The motion passed by a vote as follows:

Supervisor Jessie Medlin	ABSENT
Supervisor Eugene Thach	YES
Supervisor Gerald Clifton	ABSENT
Supervisor John Caldwell	YES
Supervisor Tommy Lewis	YES

**\*\*See Exhibit D.2\*\***

**3. Tax Appeal – Certified Letter to Texas**

Chancery Clerk Sluggo Davis presented to the Board of Supervisors a copy of the letter that was sent to G & T Development and Hacks Cross Investments regarding their tax assessment on land parcel #1067-2600.0-00039.00 and #1067-2600.0-00039.01 for 2001, informing them of the date September 4, 2001, at which time the Board of Supervisors will hear their appeal. No motions were made on this item. **\*\*See Exhibit D.3\*\***

**E. BUDGET FY02**

**1. Tax Assessor – Linda White**

Linda White from the Tax Assessor's office appeared before the Board of Supervisors to discuss the requested budget expenses. Linda White said the request for \$10,500 for office machinery & equipment was for the purchase of a GIS plotter and the required office supplies during the year. Linda White said the department would like to purchase the polo type shirts for their personnel who are in the field representing the County with the Assessments on property. They have spoken with the Audit department on how to handle as an inventory item. Linda White said they have five people, and want to provide a shirt a day.

David Armstrong said he would put the \$10,500 in the budget for the GIS plotter and supplies. Supervisor John Caldwell said he thinks the shirt's are a good idea and that it would be good for the Planning Department personnel in the field, but the budget has some limitations this year.

**2. DeSoto Sunrise – Chris Creely, Mark Boxx, John Reynolds**

Chris Creely, President of the DeSoto Sunrise Board of Directors, Mark Boxx, Director of DeSoto Sunrise home, and John Reynolds, Director of Family and Children, appeared before the Board of Supervisors to discuss their requested budget for 2002 in the amount of \$225,000. Chris Creely said the shelter's actual expenses for 2001 was short \$16,000 in budgeted funds. Chris Creely said the County was required by law to fund the actual expenses for a children's shelter and for the 2002 year the expense alone would be \$191,400. They are requesting the \$16,000 they were short this year and additional funds to provide a counseling service to the children.

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## **ITEM E.2, CONTINUED,**

Supervisor Eugene Thach asked how the contributions from individuals and companies were used by the shelter. Chris Creely said these contributions are spent for indirect administrative expenses. Supervisor John Caldwell said the County has the option to set a contract amount to run the shelter. Supervisor Caldwell asked if they could provide a list of where the cost are coming from, because the Board is at a limit as to what they can do.

Mark Boxx said the shelter has two to five kids everyday and in the months of January through March the number was ten kids. The children are sent to the shelter from DHS and the children that go through Judge Barbee's court come to the shelter. There are some children from the surrounding counties in the shelter. Supervisor Thach asked if any funds were received from other Counties. Mark Boxx said no but they could work out a contract with other Counties who have children at the shelter. Supervisor Tommy Lewis asked if there was a problem collecting money from other Counties. John Reynolds said he did not know, but they could check through DHS.

Mark Boxx said the Sheriff's Department, Margaret Baskin of the Alpha Omega Program, and the Judge provides assistance as a cooperative effort. When a child is expelled from school by a court order it is usually for a full year, they go through this program. There is no charge to the County. There is a building that is used behind the shelter home for this program. There is maintenance and upkeep required and the privacy of the children is provided by the Sunrise service.

David Armstrong asked what percentages of contributions are received from private contributors. Chris Creely said private contributions are down 70%. Margaret Baskin said the County has a good program, but it is under funded. David Armstrong asked if the Board agreed to the expenses of \$191,400, would this amount be acceptable. Chris Creely said this is not acceptable.

Supervisor John Caldwell encouraged the Sunrise Representatives to seek funds from other Counties that they are housing youth from. Supervisors Eugene Thach asked what amount of State funds does the shelter receive. Margaret Baskin said the State pays \$30 per day per child. David Armstrong said this would be \$51,000 in State revenue projected. Supervisor Tommy Lewis asked what is acceptable for the shelter. Chris Creely said the actual expense plus the shortfall from last year might be acceptable.

Supervisor John Caldwell said he wants to serve the youth of DeSoto County, but if the money is not there, that we can't. Supervisor Thach said the Board needs to know the total income of the shelter before they can make changes. Supervisor Gerald Clifton said he want the kids provided for and pressure should be put on other Counties to provide funds also for their youth.

Chris Creely said the \$225,000 pays for half of the crisis center, but they need to be asking for \$250,000 to \$300,000 for actual funding. David Armstrong said if they could show an effort to try and collect funds from other Counties, the Board would try to work on their funding. Supervisor Thach asked for information be given to the County Administrator for the Board's review.

### **3. DeSoto Council – Arts Council – Jim Flanagan, Steve McClellan**

Jim Flanagan, Director of the DeSoto Council, and Steve McClellan, of the DeSoto Arts Council appeared before the Board of Supervisors to substantiate their requested budget amount of \$266,000. Jim Flanagan said the requested increase in the budget will go to the DeSoto Arts Council to hire a director.

Steve McClellan said the DeSoto Arts Council has been in operation for three years in Hernando. They provide educational and entertainment opportunities for families in the

### **ITEM E.3, CONTINUED,**

County. The people who work for the Arts Council is made up completely of volunteers now. The reason they want to hire a director is to help the Council solicit funds through donations and grants. Mr. McClellan asked the Board to fund this program for one year and he would promise them a return on the money spent.

Supervisor John Caldwell asked what the Olive Branch Arts Council budget was, and if they would not be in competition for the same grant money. Supervisor Caldwell suggested the Arts Council be done County wide and maybe they could work together with the Olive Branch Arts Council. Mr. McClellan said the DeSoto Arts Council was developed two years ago prior to the Olive Branch Arts Council.

Supervisor Eugene Thach said he thought the Museum for the County would handle the Arts Council and they have just hired a director, why would there be a need for two directors. Mr. McClellan said the Arts Council works with children to use the theater. The museum cannot get grant facility money, only the Arts Council can receive grant money.

Jim Flanagan said this is just an umbrella organization to provide funding to different programs in the County, and when he recruits industry to locate in the County, they inquire about what County amenities we have to offer.

Supervisor Thach said the County has a grant writer, so why did the Arts Council need a grant writer. David Armstrong said the County personnel couldn't write for a public organization. Mr. McClellan said there is a coordinating need for the Arts Council. Supervisor Lewis asked where the Arts Council operates from. Mr. McClellan said they work from one of the bank facilities for now, but they have worked out of one of the volunteer's home in the past. They would like to have \$18,000 for the director and the additional funds would be used for phone lines and computer equipment.

#### **4. First Regional Library – Jim Anderson**

Jim Anderson, Director of the First Regional Library, came before the Board of Supervisors to request a budget of \$890,000.00 for 2002. County Administrator David Armstrong said that he put \$850,000.00 in the Library budget. Mr. Anderson said that his request is based on the growth in use of the libraries, changes in technology, and growth in population. Mr. Anderson stated the Regional Board of Trustee's has approved this budget request for the five Regional Libraries in DeSoto County. Mr. Anderson supported his request by presenting statistics showing how the DeSoto County libraries use has increased 126%, which is attributed to the increasing population of the County as outlined in Exhibit E.4. Mr. Anderson said part of the increase budget is due to the increased fuel cost, which the libraries experienced this past year. The increased technical equipment required and the highly trained group of dedicated employees also require additional budget expense.

Supervisor Eugene Thach asked how much of a pay raise was in the budget. Mr. Anderson said the average 5% increase across the board. The balance of the increased budget will cover books, material requested to provide electronic Internet data.

David Armstrong asked if the requirements for the new library were in the budget. Mr. Anderson said the Hernando Library would be built in 2002 and the Olive Branch would start construction. The budget only has minor operations and maintenance money in the budget.

Supervisor Thach said the Southaven Library satellite has been put on hold due to the City of Southaven not wanting a satellite facility. Mr. Anderson said the County has to make this call because of the funds available. Supervisor Caldwell said the library in Southaven

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#### **ITEM E.4, CONTINUED,**

would have to be a convenience for the people.

Supervisor Gerald Clifton asked if the library books have a shelf life and what happens to the old books. Mr. Anderson said some books do have a shelf life, ones with technical information and some high peak books that fade out in demand. These books are put in book sales. Mr. Anderson said the library does provide a good return on the dollar to the County. Supervisor Caldwell asked if inventory cost was maintained on each library and if so he would like to get a copy of this information. **\*\*See Exhibit E.4\*\***

#### **5. Election Commission – Ted Mayhall – Dale Thompson**

Circuit Clerk Dale Thompson and Election Commissioner Ted Mayhall appeared before the Board of Supervisors to address their budget request for 2002.

County Administrator David Armstrong said the maximum days the State allows the Election Commissioners to work is 135, and they receive \$70 per day which is set by the State, and there are 5 Election Commissioners.

Ted Mayhall said they hope to be working with the new election equipment and this will require more workdays for the commissioners. They will have to train the poll workers at each location on the equipment prior to elections. The Justice Department requires all of this training. Supervisor Eugene Thach asked if the County was ready for the new equipment. Mr. Mayhall said we are waiting on the Justice Department approval. Supervisor Thach said he thought the State would be recommending the election equipment. Mr. Mayhall said the Federal Government will come to the State and require a uniform system and this will likely be retro active to the purchase of equipment.

David Armstrong said he has put \$250,000 in the budget for the new election equipment. Dale Thompson said she has received calls from the Cities for amounts they should put into their budgets on the election equipment. David Armstrong said the County's portion would be \$125,000, which is one-half the cost of the equipment. Supervisor Tommy Lewis asked if the old machines have any residual. Mr. Mayhall said they have worked up the bid with the requirement the old machines will be taken into consideration in the pricing. Supervisor John Caldwell said we should consider the lease purchase agreement for the new equipment. Mr. Mayhall said the cost could be higher when doing a lease purchase than an outright purchase. David Armstrong said the budget can be amended to put under the lease purchase account and he will have to refigure based on the City's portion.

#### **6. Circuit Clerk – Dale Thompson**

County Administrator David Armstrong said the main change in the Circuit Clerk's budget is the computer software account. David Armstrong said the Circuit Clerk turns in excess fees to the County, and the County is responsible to fund the office for an elected official.

Dale Thompson said she is proposing to put the docket and case accounts on computer for this next year. Everything that is done now is by hand.

David Armstrong said he has combined all travel in County and out of County into one account. Supervisor Jessie Medlin asked if there was a report that gave what has been spent so far this year. David Armstrong said they did not have this today but he would have a report run to give to the Board a comparison of the expenses so far this year.

## **ITEM E, CONTINUED,**

### **7. Tax Collector – Joey Treadway**

Tax Collector Joey Treadway appeared before the Board of Supervisors to discuss the salaries for all Departments in the County. Mr. Treadway said all departments should be treated fairly regarding salaries. Mr. Treadway said the growth of DeSoto County was 8.9% this year and to give the revenue producers of the County a cost of living raise of 2.5% was not fair. Supervisor John Caldwell agreed that everybody deserves more than 2.5%, but the money is not there. Mr. Treadway said some departments that receive a 5% raise would not be fair to the rest of the County employees.

DeSoto County Sheriff James Riley said the reason for his request for the jailers' salary to be 5% was due to them being underpaid. Their lives are in danger everyday and they can't pay their bills on what they are making. To pay a comparable rate compared to other law enforcement must be done or he will not be able to keep people. Supervisor Eugene Thach said this Board has given a 5% raise in the past and this time they are giving what they can so that we don't have to raise taxes. Mr. Treadway said this Board has been good to the County employees, but how would they feel if the pay were due to the growth of the area. Mr. Treadway said the Justice Court personnel deserve more money because they are dealing with crime victims. Mr. Treadway said the Tax Collectors budget is fine with the exception of the salaries. Supervisor John Caldwell said he would like to take the % out and just give a flat amount. Mr. Treadway said a 5% raise for every employee would be 1/3 mill and with the work on appraisal increase this could go from 10% and up.

### **8. GIS – Sam Russell**

Sam Russell, Director of GIS, appeared before the Board of Supervisors regarding the GIS budget for 2002. Sam Russell said his requested budget was only 1% above the current years budget. The proposed budget is a 14.2% reduction from the current years budget. The biggest change in the two budget numbers is the elimination of \$20,000 for computer software and supplies. Sam Russell said his budget contained expenses for the computer, but also the maintenance agreement on the software, which will cost up to \$9,000 alone. The proposed budget of \$5,000 will not be sufficient.

The County Administrator David Armstrong said he felt the NACO grant money could be used for these purposes and that is why he cut the budget. Sam Russell said the NACO grant has certain areas the money can be spent and the maintenance on equipment is not one of them. Supervisor Eugene Thach said the salary for additional personnel was not an expected item. Supervisor John Caldwell said they expected the cost for this department to drop once it was up and running. Sam Russell said it will take two full time people to run the department, a technician and a person to help input data. Supervisor Caldwell asked what would be purchased with the additional \$20,000. Sam Russell said an Internet mapping for zoning purposes and additional licenses that will allow other County personnel access to the GIS information. Supervisor Caldwell said he will go \$5,000 more but he wants practical usage for this department. David Armstrong asked Sam Russell if he could live with \$15,000 in this account. Supervisor Tommy Lewis said the Board could do a budget amendment later in the year if funds are needed.

Supervisor Eugene Thach asked Sam to develop a pricing for data to be submitted to the Board to look at. Supervisor Tommy Lewis said he trusted Sam Russell to handle funds to advance the department and he trusted his leadership in this area.

### **9. Linda Aldridge - Justice Court**

Linda Aldridge, Director of Justice Court, said she was present to talk about the salary for Justice Court personnel. Linda Aldridge said the balance of the Justice Court budget was

## **ITEM E.9, CONTINUED,**

ok. Linda Aldridge said no one has given her an amount that could be dispersed to her employees. She asked the board to allow a 5% increase over budget and allow her to disperse to her employees. Linda Aldridge said she has a high rate of turn over in employees due to the low salary that is paid.

Supervisor Jessie Medlin said the Board has just started going through the budget and they have not decided exactly what the salary increase would be for the County. We want the department heads to make decisions regarding their employee salary increases.

Supervisor Eugene Thach said the County can not give 5% because not all departments are given 5%. Sheriff Riley said if the Board would look at employees who make above \$25,000 they could survive on a 2.5% raise, but others below the \$25,000 can't survive.

Supervisor Jessie Medlin said the County posts a job with the salary and a person takes the job knowing the salary, due to the benefits or because they can't find a job.

Supervisor John Caldwell said under certain conditions, like a persons education and being a skilled laborer, should entitle a person to make more money than an unskilled person. Supervisor Jessie Medlin said the cost of living in DeSoto County has increased in the last 10 years and seniority of an employee means a lot when giving a raise.

### **10. Operations & Maintenance – Jim Bearden**

Jim Bearden, Director of Operations and Maintenance, said he would like to go straight across the board with an amount instead of the 2.5% salary increase. Kenny Evans, Director of Buildings and Grounds, said he felt like the County would save money by doing an amount instead of percentage. Supervisor Jessie Medlin said he supported people to get paid, but if the County doesn't make money they can't give money. Supervisor Tommy Lewis said it is the responsibility of the department heads to know their people and to determine who deserves a raise and who doesn't. Supervisor Medlin said department heads have to know people and supervise their work if its not being done.

### **11. Building Improvements Account 701 – Jim Bearden**

County Administrator David Armstrong said this budget has been decreased this year. There is only new construction in the budget and this covers the Miller and Eudora Fire Stations. The rent for the Commerce property will be for a year. Jim Bearden said the budget was ok for him.

### **12. Buildings & Grounds – Kenny Evans**

County Administrator David Armstrong said Kenny Evans, Director of Building and Grounds, has requested a secretary in his department to answer the phone and do paperwork that he is now doing. David Armstrong said he put in the budget a salary of \$18,200 for this position. Kenny Evans said he supervises 13 people and he has to maintain their payroll sheets and since he is in the road a lot and at different locations there is no one to answer his phones.

Kenny Evans said he worked in Shelby County before retiring and coming to DeSoto County. He was paid \$23.00 an hour and DeSoto County only pays \$13.00 per hour for skilled people. The County needs to be more comparable in their salary.

David Armstrong asked Kenny Evans if his budget was in line. Kenny Evans said the utilities account might need more money if we experience the gas price increases like we had this year. Kenny Evans said he has requested a new vehicle for his department and asked Supervisor Thach if he would be willing to give up his vehicle for a new one and give his to the Building and Grounds department. Supervisor Thach said he wanted to keep his vehicle. David Armstrong said the Buildings and Grounds budget is up 10.4% over this year, but the Health Department will reimburse part of the building expenses.

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## **ITEM E, CONTINUED,**

### **13. County Ambulance – Bobby Storey**

County Administrator David Armstrong said the major increase in this budget is due to the overtime payment made. David Armstrong said the County has received a letter from the Wage and Hour Bureau regarding payment of time and a half for overtime hours to be paid to County Ambulance personnel. David Armstrong said the County might have to pay retroactive overtime to personnel. The County was only paying half time for overtime hours.

David Armstrong said the dispatchers' salaries have been moved to the Sheriff's Department budget. Supervisor John Caldwell asked if Dr. Adcock's fee had been put in the budget. Bobby Storey, Director of Fire and EMS said not yet. Bobby Storey said the 2.5% salary increase was all that was figured in the budget for his employees. Bobby Storey said a person starts work at \$7.00 and they can only go up as they get the paramedic training and education. Bobby Storey said a paramedic starts out at \$26,000, which is considered low pay from other areas.

### **14. EMS Rescue – Bobby Storey**

Bobby Storey, Director of Fire and EMS said this budget is ok, with the exception of salaries in the EMS office.

### **15. Volunteer Fire Departments – Bobby Storey**

County Administrator David Armstrong said the Volunteer Fire Departments receive 2 mills for an income of \$179,818 per mill. David Armstrong said he worked with Bill Bryant in the Tax Assessor's office to get the millage. Bobby Storey, representing the Fire Chiefs Association, informed the Board of Supervisors that the number of volunteer fire fighters is down, but the growth of the County demands more people. Bobby Storey said the pipeline that is being put down in the County could cause a problem for the County. Supervisor Jessie Medlin said when the pipeline people came to the Board of Supervisor for approval of the pipeline. They stated there would be no hazardous problems.

Supervisor John Caldwell said the City's pay firemen anywhere from 20 to 30 thousand a year. Supervisor Thach said dues to homeowners in Shelby County fund some fire departments. Bobby Storey said they could survive once the areas are annexed into the Cities it will be up to their fire departments to handle calls.

David Armstrong said Bobby Storey has done a good job for the County to keep things together for the County. Supervisor Tommy Lewis said while the County has grown, we have lost the volunteers. Supervisor Jessie Medlin said people are less willing to volunteer due to jobs and demands on their time. Supervisor Gerald Clifton said many people need second jobs that pay in order to make a living.

Bobby Storey said the Rapid Intervention Team that was discussed early in the year would be an answer to the County's problem for fire protection. Supervisor John Caldwell said three shifts with three people per team would require twelve people would cost the County \$420,000 just for salary and benefits and this does not include any equipment. Bobby Storey said he was recommending for daytime hours only. Supervisor Caldwell said he would prefer twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, with four daytime teams and two nighttime teams.

Bobby Storey said he had called all over the State to see how they have handled the growth rate of their County and no one has had the growth rate like DeSoto County to make a comparison. Supervisor Tommy Lewis said the County should look at a dwelling fee not a millage fee. Supervisor Caldwell asked how the County would collect the fee.

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**ITEM E.15, CONTINUED,**

Supervisor Lewis asked the County Administrator to check with other areas and Counties to see how they handle funding for the fire department.

**16. Fire Inspector – Bobby Storey**

There were no changes to this budget.

**17. Chancery Clerk – W. E. “Sluggo” Davis**

Chancery Clerk W. E. Davis said the changes that were made to the requested budget have to go back into budget due to the change in Judges last year. The court days have to be by dollars and because of the Judges location for court this year will require additional funds. The District Attorney fee was based on what was spent last year. Supervisor Eugene Thach said what was required by law the County would have to abide by.

**18. Soil Conservation**

Supervisor Tommy Lewis said he had received a call from Rev. Clarence Sparks at the Soil Conservation office, but has not called him back to see what the problem is. Supervisor Lewis asked the County Administrator to call and see what the problem is before the Board discusses this budget item.

**F. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The “Executive Session” portion of this meeting is presented under the portion of minutes called “Executive Session.

Supervisor Eugene Thach made the motion and Supervisor Gerald Clifton seconded the motion to recess until Tuesday, August 28, 2000 at 9:00 a.m. The motion passed by a vote as follows:

Supervisor Jessie Medlin	ABSENT
Supervisor Eugene Thach	YES
Supervisor Gerald Clifton	YES
Supervisor John Caldwell	YES
Supervisor Tommy Lewis	YES

THIS the 23<sup>RD</sup>. day of August 2001, these minutes have been read and approved by the DeSoto County Board of Supervisors.

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TOMMY LEWIS, President  
DeSoto County Board of Supervisors

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